



## Communist University Introductions

*These texts may be used as “openings to discussion” of the original reading texts that are supplied by the CU. They are not intended to be authoritative or conclusive. They are contributions to discussion like any other such contributions. The introductions are not a substitute for the reading texts.*

*This is the second of two booklets containing introductions to the CU “National Democratic Revolution” course.*

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### National Democratic Revolution, Part 5



[J B Marks, 1903-1972](#)

# Congress, Pact and Defiance

The National Democratic Revolution is more than a theory. It has a history. In South Africa, the unity of the vanguard party, the mass democratic liberation movement, and workers' industrial unions, was created by the actions of countless individuals in the course of many historic events.

In terms of South African history we have already noted the formation of the ANC in 1912, the ICU in 1919, and the SACP in 1921. We have considered the Black Republic Thesis, Moses Kotane's Cradock Letter, and the sectarian problems of the CPSA in the 1930s. The Party had already begun to solve some of these problems by the time South Africa became part of the war of 1939-1945.

Although we will mostly refer from now on, in the second half of this 12-part series on the NDR, to South African events, yet it is as well to keep in mind that the National Democratic revolutionary wave was a world-wide historic change. NDRs swept old-style colonialism almost completely off the face of the planet in the decades following the Second World War. Almost, but not quite. The brutal colonisation of Palestine continues to this day.

Thanks partly to the [Comintern](#) and to [Georgi Dimitrov](#), the World War that began in 1939 was to a great extent a conscious unity-in-action against the fascists. It is true that the Comintern was wound up on 15 May, 1943, but by that time the international anti-fascist alliance was in place.

The war came to an end in August, 1945, and the United Nations came into being on 24 October 1945, with a membership of 51 nations (and an intention of banning war forever). Sixty-eight years later, and as a direct consequence of multiple, worldwide National Democratic Revolutions, UN membership is approaching 200 independent nations – nearly four times as many as there were in 1945.

A lot of organising had been done in the relatively more favourable conditions in South Africa during the anti-fascist war of 1939-45. Among the structures that came into existence were the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions, and the African Mine Workers' Union, one of whose leaders was J B Marks [pictured above].

A lot was in place, yet action was required that would convert the preparations into permanent, historical and revolutionary facts. The historic action that fulfilled this role in the first place was the African Mineworkers' Strike of September, 1946.

Writing in 1976, M P Naicker described how the African Mineworkers' Strike changed everything, both within South Africa, and also externally:

*"The African miners' strike was one of those historic events that, in a flash of illumination, educate a nation, reveal what has been hidden, and destroy lies and illusions. The strike transformed African politics overnight.*

*"Dr. A. B. Xuma, President-General of the African National Congress, joined a delegation of the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) sent to the 1946 session of the United Nations General Assembly when the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa was raised by the Government of India. He, together with the SAIC representatives - H. A. Naidoo and Sorabjee Rustomjee - and Senator H. M. Basner, a progressive white 'Native Representative' in the South African Senate, used the occasion to appraise Member States of the United Nations of the strike of the African miners and other aspects of the struggle for equality in South Africa.*

*"Dealing with this visit the ANC, at its annual conference from December 14 to 17, 1946, passed the following resolution:*

*"Congress congratulates the delegates of India, China and the Soviet Union and all other countries who championed the cause of democratic rights for the oppressed non-European majority in South Africa."*

*"The brave miners of 1946 gave birth to the ANC Youth League's Programme of Action adopted in 1949; they were the forerunners of the freedom strikers of May 1, 1950, against the Suppression of Communism Act, and the tens of thousands who joined the 26 June nation-wide protest strike that followed the killing of sixteen people during the May Day strike. They gave the impetus for the 1952 Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws when thousands of African, Indian and Coloured people went to jail; they inspired the mood that led to the upsurge in 1960 and to the emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) - the military wing of the African National Congress."*

In the current set we will proceed to the Doctors' Pact and then to the Defiance Campaign that was mounted following the banning of the CPSA in 1950. In the week after that, we will go to the Freedom Charter campaign of the mid-1950s. In all of this we are seeing the NDR as a revolutionary class alliance that is democratic in both form and content.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The African Miners Strike of 1946, Naicker.](#)



Naicker, Xuma, Dadoo

## Three Doctors' Pact

*"This Joint Meeting declares its sincerest conviction that for the future progress, goodwill, good race relations, and for the building of a united, greater and free South Africa, full franchise rights must be extended to all sections of the South African people..."*

This second document in the fifth part of the CU NDR series is a transcript of the "Three Doctors' Pact" of March, 1947. It was a historic pact for democracy and for national liberation, as the above quotation from it shows.

The three doctors were Dr A B Xuma, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, and Dr Monty Naicker, leaders of the ANC, the Transvaal Indian Congress, and the Natal Indian Congress respectively [Picture: Dr Xuma signing; Dr Dadoo is seen on the right side of the picture, Dr Monty Naicker on the other side].

This Pact was a precursor of the Women's Charter of 1954 and of the Freedom Charter of 1955, including the latter's volunteer campaign prior to the Congress of the People and its succeeding campaign of publication after the signing of the Freedom Charter.

The Pact declares *"the urgency of cooperation between the non-European peoples and other democratic forces."* It demanded *"Equal economic and industrial rights and opportunities and the recognition of African trade unions under the Industrial Conciliation Act."*

In other words, it goes beyond the immediate business of unity of African and Indian organisations, and quite explicitly leads the reader towards the grouping of

democratic forces that was to be further developed into the Congress of the People eight years later, and into the product of that assembly: The Freedom Charter.

In all of these cases we can see that mass organisations of specific constituencies were able to combine as part of a process of national social development, and more precisely, towards a National Democratic Revolution.

This Doctors' Pact made a direct reference to the gains of the anti-fascist war, during which South Africa had been allied with the Soviet Union among others, as follows: *"every effort [must] be made to compel the Union Government to implement the United Nations' decisions and to treat the Non-European peoples in South Africa in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter."*

To this end the Pact determined that *"a vigorous campaign be immediately launched."*

Reaction was closing in. The quasi-fascist and racist National Party was elected to a majority the all-white Parliament in the following year, 1948. The Communist Party of South Africa, later reborn as the clandestine South African Communist Party (SACP), and finally legalised again in 1990, was banned in 1950. The consequence of this banning was the Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign when the ANC rallied to the defence of the Party, while the Trade Union Movement grew towards the foundation of SACTU in 1955, just in time for it to take part in the Congress of the People.

Many other diverse and historic events took place in the decade between the end of the anti-fascist world war in 1945 and the Congress of the People in 1955, but the general movement is clear: towards a National Democratic Revolution, based on the unity in action of the workers' Party, the united national liberation movement, and the organised mass trade union movement.

**The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Three Doctors Pact, 1947, Xuma, Naicker, Dadoo.](#)**

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[Henry Nxumalo, 1917-1957](#)

## **Defiance Campaign**

The document attached, and linked below, the third in this part of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) series, was written by the famous “Drum” reporter, Henry Nxumalo [pictured above].

In 1950, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) was banned, dissolved itself, and gradually began to reconstitute itself as a clandestine party, the SACP. The Communist Party made no further public statements until 1959, when the first issue of the African Communist magazine was published.

But two other things happened: the remaining, legal components of the movement rallied round to protest against the banning and to support the formerly-CPSA comrades, such as Dadoo, Marks, Bopape and Kotane, as reported by Henry Nxumalo a few months later in the Drum magazine.



**Volunteer-in-Chief**

The movement was solid. The ANC did not wash off the communists. The NDR was already on firm foundations. The Defiance Against Unjust Laws campaign, which was first and foremost a campaign against the banning of the communist party, was led by Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, among others. Mandela was that campaign's Volunteer-in-Chief.

The lead up to this episode is described in Govan Mbeki's 1992 book "[The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa](#)". At the beginning of Chapter 7 of that book, Mbeki recalls the joint ANC/CPSA protest against the Suppression of Communism Act on May Day 1950, and the massacre of 18 people on that day by the National Party regime that had come to power in 1948. This is something South Africans should always remember on the May Day holiday each year.

Consequent to this massacre, 26 June 1950 was observed with a stay-away as "Freedom Day".

Two years later, the same day, 26 June, was used for the launch of the Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign in 1952, and it was used again in 1955 when the [Freedom Charter](#) was adopted on that date at the Congress of the People in Kliptown.

Note that 26 June, our original Freedom Day, having to do with the protests against the banning of the Communist Party, is not a Public Holiday in South Africa. 24 September was made a public "Heritage Day" holiday at the insistence of the Inkatha Freedom Party (see [here](#)).

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign, Drum, 1952, Nxumalo](#).
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Congress of the People, Kliptown

# Congress Call

This post is about the preparations, from 1953 onwards, for the 1955 Congress of the People (CoP); about the Congress of the People as a definite event; and about the Freedom Charter that came out of that event, all considered as historic acts and as part of the process of building the South African National Democratic Revolution (NDR).

What could very advantageously be used for this discussion is an electronic copy of the book by Jeremy Cronin and Raymond Suttner, published in 1986, called “30 Years of the Freedom Charter”, or even just a good extract from the book. But unfortunately the book is not available on the Internet. Instead, it has been polished up and re-published as “50 Years of the Freedom Charter”, in hard copy only. If you can get either one of these editions, do use it to prepare for this discussion.

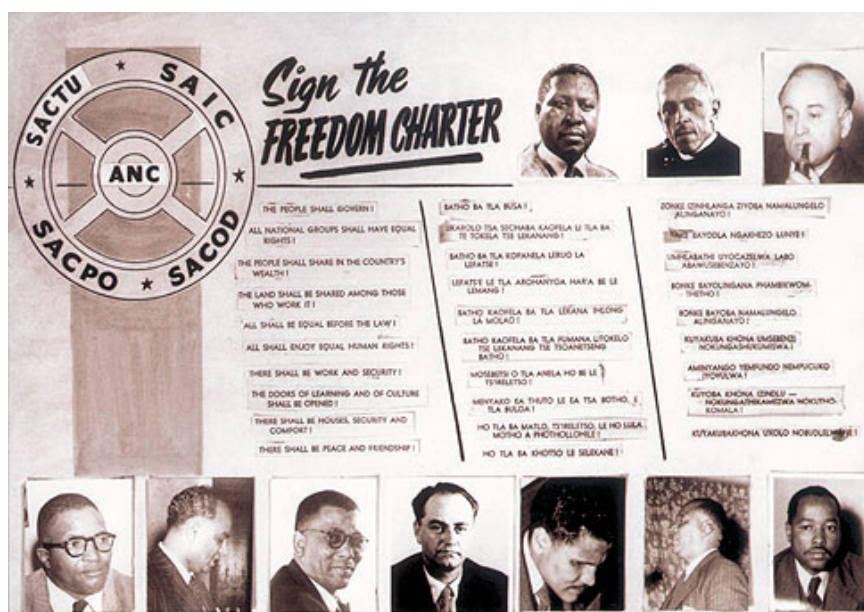
“The Congress of the People and Freedom Charter Campaign”, by Ismail Vadi, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1995, is another book that comes up in searches of the Internet. Vadi’s book has recently been re-published in South Africa.



According to the small samples of Vadi's book that can be read on line, (i.e. the [Introduction](#), the [Preface](#), and the [Foreword](#) by Walter Sisulu) the planning of the CoP began in 1953, and the campaign was only wound down in 1956, the year of the beginning of the Treason Trial, which was a consequence of the CoP. The Treason Trial continued until 1961, by which time all the defendants had been acquitted.

Another document on the Internet is a short [History of the Freedom Charter](#) on the "non-partisan" South African History Online web site, funded by the Ford Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and other liberal philanthropists. "Non-partisan" in the case of SAHO therefore tends to mean that the Communist Party is mentioned as little as possible. Nevertheless, these pages bear out the extended nature of the political intervention that was the total CoP Campaign, a campaign that was a clear extension of the National Democratic Revolution policy of the recently-banned CPSA and of the Comintern before it, since 1920.

The CoP/Freedom Charter campaign was a determined and visible construction of a national democratic project. It involved huge masses of people. It was a self-conscious, deliberate and fully worked-out design, even to the Nehru-style caps in ANC colours that the Volunteers wore. [See the photo above showing the platform at Kliptown, with a Volunteer in attendance]



There is an error in the SAHO text: There were five organisations involved, not four. SACTU, the non-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions, was a late entry to the CoP but it made the cut and it managed to feature in the "wheel of unity" that nowadays still forms part of both COSATU's and the ANC's logos.

The second image shows the document that was used to publicise the Freedom Charter after the Congress, including the newly-pasted “SACTU” acronym, and the “ANC” acronym shifted from the rim to the hub of the wheel. The document includes quotes from the Freedom Charter itself.

This series is about the NDR. This post and the reading are given so as to invite you to consider the whole episode of the CoP campaign from 1953 to 1956, and the subsequent struggle around the Treason Trial, as one of the strongest specific and historical contributions to the NDR.

The document linked below includes the “Call to the Congress of the People”. This was a mobilising flyer and it shows very clearly the large scope and scale of the call to “all Unionwide Organisations”.

The Freedom Charter was much more than a list of demands. It was an integral part of a kind of conscious nation-building which had real revolutionary content and which demonstrated real democracy in action.

Those old comrades laid down an irresistible pattern. It appealed to the heart as well as to the eye and to the mind, and it still surrounds us today, manifested in the continuing Congress Alliance of which the SACP, legal once more, is now an open part. There was never a time when the communists were not part of the National Democratic Revolution. It is theirs, as much as it is anybody else’s. It is family.

As it was when Lenin spoke to the [Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920](#), so it was in 1955. Two things were required. One was a genuine class alliance and unity-in-action against the main oppressor class, the colonialist monopoly capitalists. The other was the deliberate extension of democracy for the creation of a democratic nation. The CoP campaign was exactly in this mould.

- **The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Call to the Congress of the People; Freedom Charter](#).**
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[Albert Luthuli, 1898-1967](#)

## The Freedom Charter as part of the NDR

This week we are looking at the Congress of the People campaign that in 1953 followed the Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign, which was in turn a consequence of the banning of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1950; plus we are looking at the Freedom Charter.

The 1955 Kliptown Congress of the People, where the Freedom Charter was adopted, was followed by a campaign of conscientisation and positive endorsement of the Freedom Charter both by individuals and by mass organisations. This was interrupted in 1956 by the Treason Trial of most of the Congress Alliance leadership, which was not concluded until 1961, a year after Sharpeville and the banning of the ANC in the year of 1960.

In the previous post on this topic we looked at the “Call to the Congress of the People”, taking it as a typical tactical example of the conscious, deliberate, democratic formation of a collective revolutionary Subject of History through well-designed organisation.

Taken all together, we can see the 1950s as a time of focussed, concerted organising towards the NDR – a “process and not an event”, as we used to say.

This leaves us with the Freedom Charter itself. Nowadays it is often quoted as a bible, and without explicit reference to the NDR.

The Freedom Charter does say that “all who work shall be free to form trade unions, to elect their officers and to make wage agreements with their employers”. But it does not specifically say that political parties shall be free to organise. Nor does it say that women should organise as women, or as working women.

Hence there are two lessons coming out of the 1950s. One is the practical example of the movement’s work throughout the decade; the other is the rights-based Charter that was produced in the course of all the work.

This sometimes disconnected contrast between action and prescription remains characteristic of South African politics.

**Picture:** Chief Albert Luthuli, President of the ANC in the 1950s

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Call to the Congress of the People; Freedom Charter](#).
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Pondoland Revolt, taken by Eli Weinberg

## Peasants' Revolt

The National Democratic Revolution is based upon a clear understanding of objective, dynamic class politics. It proceeds from a class alliance against the oppressor class, towards the fullest possible national democracy.

There is an interrelationship between the underlying (objective) class realities and the subjective (conscious) organisational politics of democracy. In these posts, we have tended either to concentrate upon one side of this dialectical relationship, or the other.

The previous two parts of this series have been about the deliberate organisation and mobilisation of the NDR in the 1940s and 1950s. This part is more about objective class realities, or in other words, about Political Economy. The next part will be about organised politics again, and then the final two parts will be of a more synthetic nature, dealing with both subject and object together.

Looking forward, the last revolutionary confrontation is bound to be between the big bourgeoisie and its gravedigger, which is the proletariat that the capitalist bourgeoisie must constantly bring into being. Yet it is far from the case that in the present time all other classes have died out in South Africa. For success, these other, relatively minor classes should be allies of the proletariat in the National Democratic Revolution.

Class alliance is essential for the isolation and defeat of the oppressor, so as to deny the oppressor the comfort of support, and conversely, to prevent the oppressor from isolating and defeating the working class. The politics of class alliance were practiced in Karl Marx's time and before that, in the Great French Revolution. Class alliances were again crucial in the Russian and the Chinese Revolutions of the 20th Century, to name but two out of many. The hammer-and-sickle emblem now used by the SACP was first used during the Russian Revolution of 1917, to signify class alliance between workers and peasants.

In order for a class alliance to be possible, the working class must be class-conscious, and so must the other classes be. The latter often need to be assisted by the working class and by the intellectual partisans of the working class, the Communist Party. Yet there is rather little in the way of class-conscious literature about South Africa's large petty-bourgeois class, who are for the most part very poor people, and little of a directly political nature about the agricultural petty-bourgeoisie, who are the peasantry, or about the oppressors of the rural petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry, who are South Africa's bureaucratised feudal class.



**Govan Mbeki**

The classic exception to this intellectual famine is communist journalist and Rivonia trialist Govan Mbeki's [pictured] ["Peasants' Revolt"](#), published in 1964 (see the link below). Other works such as ["Landmarked"](#), by Cherryl Walker (Jacana, 2008) tell us that the huge misery of rural displacement and impoverishment has even up to now hardly been ameliorated, or turned in a sufficiently positive direction.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Peasants' Revolt, C8, Chiefs in the Saddle, Govan Mbeki.](#)





[Mahmood Mamdani](#)

## Citizen and Subject

Dar-es-Salaam-trained Ugandan intellectual Mahmood Mamdani's 1996 book "Citizen and Subject" brings more facts and insights about peasants and workers, to assist with understanding class alliance - the necessary condition for the National Democratic Revolution. The chapter **attached** is the book's summing-up. Note that Mamdani's sense of the word "subject" in this work is different and opposite from the usual philosophical and communist one. Here it means a subordinate person, as opposed to a free person.

Professor Mamdani [pictured above] has now returned to Uganda to head the [Makerere Institute of Social Research](#) (MISR). To read more about this significant move, [click here](#).

While the proletariat seeks allies, so does Imperialism. In this work, Mamdani's principal insight is to recognise the class alliance typically sought by the Imperialists in neo-colonial Africa countries.

According to Mamdani, the Imperialists prefer to ally with the backward rural feudal elements commonly called "traditional leaders", "chiefs" or sometimes "Kings" in Africa; and against the modernising bourgeoisie and proletariat of the cities and towns.



To a South African this is not surprising, and indeed Mamdani regards South Africa as the classic case in this regard, although he quotes many other examples in the book.

Mamdani's analysis is important because it contradicts a common presumption, namely that the Imperialist monopoly-capitalists tend to work through "compradors", who are local aspirant bourgeoisie, or bourgeoisie-for-rent, and who do the Imperialists' work for them.

Such compradors do exist, and clearly they exist in South Africa. Yet Mamdani's scheme reflects the facts and history of Imperialism in Africa better, at least up to now. Imperialism is, in general, hostile to any national bourgeoisie. The typical neo-colonial war of recent decades, including both the Iraq war and the recent NATO war of recolonisation against Libya, is a war of Imperialism against a national bourgeoisie that wants national sovereignty and control over its country's national resources.

In the light of this analysis it becomes easier to see why it is that the South African proletariat has long been, via the ANC, in alliance with parts of its national bourgeoisie, for national liberation, and against the monopoly-capitalist oppressors with their Imperial-globalist links.

For their part, the Imperialists relied heavily in the past on Bantustan leaders and on the Inkatha Freedom Party, but the ANC was able to form better links with the rural as well as the urban masses, thus achieving a class alliance that could, and still does, dominate the country in terms of mass support, including electoral support.

**The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Citizen and Subject, C8, Linking the Urban and the Rural, Mamdani](#).**

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[Pierre Poujade, 1920-2003](#)

## The Petty Bourgeoisie and Poujadism

This section on class alliance has looked at peasants and traditional leaders, as well as at bourgeois and proletarians. We now consider the petty-bourgeoisie, which is a large class in South Africa, and one that includes a high proportion of the very poor. The hawkers and the “survivors” are members of this class, as much as the small shopkeepers and small business people (the so-called “SMMEs”).

The petty bourgeoisie are the urban equivalent of the peasant class. They share with the peasantry the peculiar characteristic of being what Karl Marx called (in the [“18<sup>th</sup> Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”](#)) a “sack of potatoes”. Such a class has minimal internal linkages. It exists as an aggregate, and not as an organism. In chemical terms, it is a mixture, and not a compound.

This is in contrast with the working proletariat, which is a socialised, or in other words, interdependent class. For this among other reasons, the working class is a more advanced class, capable of giving leadership to the peasantry and to the petty-bourgeoisie.

In his [address at Joe Slovo’s graveside](#) on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Slovo’s death, 6 January 2010, the current General Secretary of the SACP Cde Dr Blade Nzimande said, concerning the leadership the working-class party must give:

*“We must also recruit amongst small businesses, who continue to be suffocated by monopoly capital in general, the capitalist malls built in the*

*townships that are killing their small businesses, and the ‘tenderpreneurs’ who continue to enrich themselves often through corrupt tenders at the expense of honest small entrepreneurs who do not have political connections in the state. We must strengthen small entrepreneurs and defeat ‘tenderpreneurs’! We need to support skills development for co-operatives, small and micro enterprises. We need to deepen our struggle for the transformation of our financial sector to benefit the workers and the poor, including co-operatives and small and micro businesses.*

*“As we have done over the past 16 years and before, we need to engage and seek to influence the terms and conditions under which a new black section of the bourgeoisie emerges and grow. We need to fight for truly broad based empowerment and seek to direct investment into the productive sectors of our economy that is creating jobs. We need to continuously expose and challenge self-enrichment of a few and fight the emergence of a highly dependent compradorial bourgeoisie! In this struggle we must also seek to expose opportunistic use of the language and demands of the working class in order to hide the accumulation agenda of a compradorial bourgeoisie. This is the meaning of Slovo’s life, struggles and observations today!”*

The above-quoted speech was all the more valuable for the fact that the Marxist literature devoted to the petty bourgeoisie in our time is pitifully small, worldwide. We now go to a recollection of France in the 1950s (but written later) for an account of the phenomenon of “Poujadism” (**attached**). This was a petty-bourgeois uprising that allied itself, in its beginning and at local level, with the communists, until it degenerated towards near-fascism. See above for a picture of [Pierre Poujade](#) (1920-2003), the leader of this movement.

In their relations with the intermediate classes, or fractions of classes, history shows that the communists must proceed with great care, and must not lose focus. But it also shows that these classes are real, and can potentially have a self-conscious and beneficial development, especially if aided by the always-better-organised working class. But if petty-bourgeois populism gets out of hand, which it can do, then the distance between it and fascism can be covered in a short time.

Foster’s account is written from a somewhat sectarian point of view. It disparages the efforts of the French communist party, but it does not say that the vanguard party should not give leadership to the petty bourgeoisie. On the contrary, Foster confirms this necessity. All he can manage to say against the communists is that if the Trotskyists had been in charge they would have done better. This is a hollow claim.

More on the nature and the problems of the petty bourgeoisie can be found in Engels' (e.g. "[The Housing Question](#)"), Rosa Luxemburg's (e.g. "[Reform or Revolution?](#)"), and Lenin's (e.g. "[The Tax in Kind](#)") writings.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The case-history of Poujadisme, Foster](#).

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## National Democratic Revolution, Part 8



[Oliver Tambo, 1917-1993](#)

## Strategy and Tactics

*"The art of revolutionary leadership consists in providing leadership to the masses and not just to its most advanced elements... what appears to be 'militant' and 'revolutionary' can often be counter-revolutionary."*

*"The enemy is as aware as we are that the side that wins the allegiance of the people, wins the struggle. It is naive to believe that oppressed and beleaguered people cannot temporarily, even in large numbers, be won over by fear, terror, lies, indoctrination, and provocation to treat liberators as enemies. In fact history proves that without the most intensive all-round political activity this is the more likely result. It is therefore all the more vital*

*that the revolutionary leadership is nation-wide and has its roots both inside and outside the actual areas of combat. **Above all, when victory comes, it must not be a hollow one. To ensure this we must also ensure that what is brought to power is not an army but the masses as a whole at the head of which stands its organised political leadership.***

*“In the last resort it is only the success of **the national democratic revolution** which - by destroying the existing social and economic relationships - will bring with it a correction of the historical injustices perpetrated against the indigenous majority...”*

The above lines are taken from the ANC's [Morogoro] Strategy and Tactics document of 1969 (attached). It can be taken as the idea of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) in a nutshell. What must be brought to power is not an army, but the masses.

Politics is in the subjective realm. Politics is about the essence of subjectivity - freedom. But politics can only have an existence within the limits of objective realities.

Objectively, the NDR has a steadily-built organisational history of personalities, of events, and of documents. It has worked within the several class components, and at the same time it has changed by its action the balance of class forces in South Africa.

After the Freedom Charter, the original 1969 ANC Strategy and Tactics document is the next most prominent of all the NDR documents. In discussing the military activities of Umkhonto we Siswe (MK), the Morogoro S&T outlines alliance politics in terms that are sometimes crystal-clear, and sometimes not so clear. For an example of the latter, the class nature of the enemy is not described in very direct terms in the S&T document itself. Still, the Morogoro S&T is the best one to use as the basis for a discussion of the subjective political action of this period, and for some of its remarks on the underlying class realities.

The [new version of “Strategy and Tactics”](#) passed at the 2007 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference of the ANC at Polokwane supplies a concise description of how, in the past, the enemy was defined, thus (from paragraph 96 of that document):

*“The liberation movement defined the enemy, on the other hand, as the system of white minority domination with the white community being the beneficiaries and defenders of this system. These in turn were made up of*

*workers, middle strata and capitalists. Monopoly capital was identified as the chief enemy of the NDR.”*

Unfortunately this clarity of the latest S&T document is only in relation to the past. In the paragraphs that follow the above, it can be seen that the current S&T rehabilitates the monopoly capitalists as part of “concentric circles” of “drivers of change”. This new S&T was drafted by the “1996 class project”, i.e. those who were removed from the leadership at the same conference but who nevertheless managed to get their version of the S&T passed. It holds out an imaginary scenario where the liberation movement mediates and manages relations between all classes in a static, eternal, and practically class-neutral “National Democratic Society”.

Whereas the 1969 S&T never mentioned any such static “National Democratic Society”, but was, on the contrary, unequivocally in favour of a bold transfer of class power.

*“In essence, a revolutionary policy is one which holds out the quickest and most fundamental transformation and transfer of power from one class to another,”* it said.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Strategy and Tactics, Morogoro, 1969, ANC.](#)
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[Hilda Bernstein, 1915-2006; Rusty Bernstein, 1920-2002](#)

## Road to South African Freedom

Among other things, we are trying, in this short series, to recover the understanding that the National Democratic Revolution, taken in full, is a project whose origins can be found [at least 95 years ago](#), and which has a continuous history from that time onwards, both outside and inside South Africa.

We are trying to trace the main steps of the NDR in South Africa and we have consequently touched, among others, upon the Black Republic Thesis, the Cradock Letter, the Doctors' Pact, the Defiance Campaign, the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter, the Peasants' Revolt, the Strategy and Tactics document of the Morogoro, Tanzania conference of the ANC in 1969, and now the SACP's first full-dress programme, called The Road to South African Freedom (**attached**), which is our second item in this part.

In 1959, the African Communist magazine was launched from exile. It was the first public manifestation of the South African Communist Party, re-established and renamed after the banning and dissolution of the CPSA in 1950.

The Treason Trial that followed the Congress of the People came to an end in 1961 with the acquittal of all the defendants.

Between 1959 and the 1969 Morogoro Conference, a number of things happened. New campaigns had been launched, but came to an abrupt end following the



Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the ANC and the PAC in 1960. Umkhonto we Sizwe was launched in 1961.

The raid on Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia took place in 1963. It was a great setback to the movement.

The SACP published The Road to South African Freedom in 1962. After a few quarterly editions of the African Communist (the “AC”) that had appeared up to that time, and a cyclostyled sheet marking the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Party produced inside the country in 1961, The Road to South African Freedom is one of the first published document of the SACP.

The Road to South African Freedom is about National Democratic Revolution. This can be seen from its section specifically on the NDR, where the document spells out that:

*“This crisis can only be resolved by a revolutionary change in the social system which will overcome these conflicts by putting an end to the colonial oppression of the African and other non-White people. The immediate and imperative interests of all sections of the South African people demand the carrying out of such a change, a **national democratic revolution...**”*

It is a long, rich, rewarding document. Because of its length and because of the limitations of booklet printing, we have divided it into three parts.

Things that were said and written in those days continue to be relevant. The Road to South African Freedom is a treasure of the Party and the nation, not only because it is a major element in the history of the NDR, but also because it goes even deeper than the NDR.

I also presents a couple of problems from the point of view of study. One is that it is too long to fit easily within the format of the CU’s courses. Hence it has to be left to comrades to study it individually, or on other collective platforms.

The other problem is that the origins of the document are not widely known. The first, small edition, designed for clandestine distribution, was certainly printed in London. But whether it was written in London, Moscow or South Africa or somewhere else is not known. The process by which this historic document was drafted and approved, and the names of the individuals involved, are not known to the present writer of this introduction.

Pictured above are Hilda and Lionel “Rusty” Bernstein. They were obliged to flee the country after the 1964 conclusion of the Rivonia trial. Cde Rusty had been one of the accused, was acquitted, then immediately re-arrested, re-charged and released on bail under house arrest.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Road to South African Freedom, 1962, SACP](#).
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## National Democratic Revolution, Part 8b



[Dr Yusuf Dadoo, 1909-1983](#)

## Dealing with the Anti-Communist Tendency

Following the African National Congress National Executive Committee meeting of 14-16 May 2010, it was reported in the mass media that ANC President Jacob Zuma had referred in his summing-up to the story of the Gang of Eight, and had mentioned at least one of the eight (Kgokong, also known as Mqota) by name.

The National Union of Mineworkers Central Committee, meeting 13-14 May 2010, also resolved as follows:

*“CC noted with dismay the current **anti-communist tendencies** publicly displayed through public platforms and at times hidden under questions already addressed by the SACP CC in the response to the Gang of 8 in 1976. CC rejects any insinuation that the ANC is under serious threat by Communists and the CC further confirms that the ANC class character should be defended, in fact any attempt to chase Communists away or removing them from leadership of the ANC should be rejected by members of the ANC.*”

*CC further confirms that any member irrespective of other political activeness who gets nominated and elected in the ANC elective conference is nominated and elected as ANC member by ANC members, this means that there are no Communist or SACP representatives in any structure of the ANC .”*

The full text of the 1976 SACP CC statement on the Gang of Eight is contained in Document 131 of the volume “South African Communists Speak”, published in 1981, and in the African Communist, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 1976. The document, called “[The Enemy Hidden Under the Same Colour](#)”, is also archived [here](#). It directly quotes from, and reinforces in argument, two of the other main documents used here this week: the “Road to South African Freedom” and the (Morogoro) “Strategy and Tactics”.

This Gang-of-Eight document is 14 pages and nearly 9000 words long. For that reason the shorter 1962 document issued by the SACP following the breakdown of the South Africa United Front because of the treachery of the PAC was preferred for discussion, and is the one attached and also available from the link below.

The 1976 CC statement makes an emphatic the link between the two occasions. It refers to the Gang of Eight, and the PAC, as “Birds of a Feather”. More precisely, it says:

*“...like the PAC before them, this group is the expression of a political trend which seeks to dilute and eliminate the revolutionary content of South Africa's liberation struggle. Basically it wants the ANC to return to a type of nationalism which serves only a small elite and not the masses of the oppressed people. The social base for this tendency is to be found amongst those classes and groups within the oppressed who seek the kind of 'liberation' which will, at best, **replace the white exploiter with a black exploiter.**”*

The South Africa United Front, made up of the ANC, PAC, SWANU and SAIC had been put together after Sharpeville. The attached and linked document is a contemporary article by Dr Dadoo about the break-up of the Front and the causes of the break-up, which had to do with the behaviour of the PAC, in particular. This document is useful for its description of the political structures and for Dadoo's enunciation in it of the general principles of united fronts (which the PAC had violated).

Once again, like all of the main theoretical and programmatic documents of the movement, these are about National Democratic Revolution in particular. More than most, they deal with it directly and in its most difficult aspects. The 1976 document unequivocally denounces “*the type of nationalism which is not revolutionary but reactionary*”.

It goes on to say:

*“Our movement has never hidden the fact that there is a relationship between the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party on those questions of policy which both organisations share in common. In particular both organisations believe that in the present stage of the revolutionary process in South Africa, the primary aim is the national liberation of the most exploited and most oppressed section of the South African people - the Africans.”*

This formulation, which is cheaply denounced as “stagism” by the camp-following panders and scavengers of the revolution, is actually the very understanding which liberates the National Democratic Revolution from “stewing in its own juice” in the manner proposed by the 2007 Strategy and Tactics, as we discussed [here](#). Because as Joe Slovo wrote in “[The South African Working class and the National Democratic Revolution](#)”, (1988, which we will come to next week in this series) the point about a stage is that it is followed by another stage.

Tomorrow, in the interest of an all-round view of the politics of National Democratic Revolution, we will look at Tanzania’s Arusha Declaration, forever associated with the late Mwalimu (“Teacher”) Julius Nyerere.

[Image: Dr Yusuf Dadoo, President of the South African Indian Congress, Chairman of the SACP, Vice-chairman of the Revolutionary Council]

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Disruptive Role of the PAC and United Front Failure, 1962, Dadoo](#).

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## National Democratic Revolution, Part 8c



[Julius Nyerere, 1922-1999](#)

# Arusha Declaration

So far in this series we have moved through five decades from the 1920s to the 1970s, with sufficient detail to demonstrate that in the world at large, and in South Africa in particular, conscious, deliberate National Democratic Revolution was the main historical process under way in that time. In Africa, the process gathered speed and momentum from 1960.

On 25 May 1963, earlier regional initiatives, notably the Pan-African Freedom Movement of East, Central and Southern Africa (PAFMECSA), of which Tanzania had been a leading member, gave way for the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Africa Day is consequently celebrated each year towards the end of May.

The last supporting document to the Morogoro Strategy and Tactics is named after another Tanzanian town: Arusha. It is the famous (attached) 1967 “Arusha Declaration” of Julius Nyerere and the ruling TANU (Tanganyika African National Union) party of Tanganyika at the time, on Socialism and Self-Reliance.

Tanganyika and Zanzibar united in the following year as Tanzania, and TANU united with the Afro-Shirazi Party in 1977 to become the Chama cha Mapinduzi – “the party of the revolutionaries”, CCM.

The document reflects TANU’s view of the political economy of their country and how it could be led to a better condition (i.e. a better life for all). This document is now nearly fifty years old, but at the time of the release of Nelson Mandela, for example, it was only a little over twenty years old.

Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College was established in Morogoro only about a decade after the Arusha Declaration. (In those days “Arusha Declaration” was joke-slang for “going by foot”).

The document has a peculiar understanding of socialism, which it calls both a policy, and also a belief. Nyerere’s 1962 pamphlet “Ujamaa – the Basis of African Socialism” (also attached) calls socialism “an attitude of mind”. Peasants can be as socialist as workers, according to these documents. Yet Tanzania did have an understanding that a purely peasant family was not fully socialised. They later encouraged villagisation, and rural party organisation according to the “tenth house” (*chumba kumi*) principle. The document tries to reconcile socialist aspirations with peasant facts of life.

The document is both national-democratic and developmentalist. It prefigured much of what has happened since, including in South Africa, and which is still happening. It prefigures President Zuma's sentiments about his May, 2010 visit to Sweetwaters, for example, except that South Africans do not say that "money is not the weapon". On the contrary, in South Africa money, translating into "delivery", is nearly always thought to be the weapon of development.

The NDR has thus been debated, and continues to be debated.

The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Arusha Declaration, 1967](#), [Nyerere](#), and [Ujamaa - The Basis of African Socialism, Nyerere, 1962](#).

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## National Democratic Revolution, Part 9



[Joe Slovo, 1926 - 1995](#)

# SA Working Class and the NDR

The previous week's part of this 10-part series on the National Democratic Revolution was based around the ANC's Morogoro Strategy and Tactics document of 1969. We took our examination of the development of South Africa's NDR up to the beginning of 1976, when the document "[The Enemy Hidden Under the Same Colour](#)" was published following the treachery and the consequent expulsion from the ANC of the "Gang of Eight".

Later the same year the "Soweto uprising" of youth began, and spread all over the country.

Trade Unionism re-expanded from the early 1970s with strike waves in Durban and in the Witwatersrand where the watershed Carletonville Massacre took place on 11 September 1973. This year marks the forty-second anniversary of that event.

FOSATU, a syndicalist-led federation, was formed in 1979. It gave way to the National Democratic Revolutionary Alliance-aligned COSATU in 1985. The United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched in 1983.

All of these activities, amounting to the creation of living, democratic structures on a national scale, typify the National Democratic Revolution. They showed precisely how organisation into democratic structures formed the relentless collective Subject of History that then became impossible to resist.

Joe Slovo published “[The SA Working Class and the National Democratic Revolution](#)” (see the attached document, also linked below) in 1988 at a time when he was the General Secretary of the SACP. The Party was still clandestine, though it had begun to legitimise itself. The official end of its 40-year period of enforced illegality was to come two years later. Like many political documents, this one takes shape around a polemical response to contemporary opponents who may no longer be well remembered. In this case it was the particular “workerists” and compromisers of the time that Slovo mentions on the first page of the document.

But as with the polemics of Marx, Engels and Lenin, in the course of the argument against otherwise long-forgotten foes, Slovo was obliged to set up a fully concrete, rounded assessment of the meaning of the NDR, which still remains today as the best single and definitive text on this matter. He succeeded brilliantly.

Slovo quickly establishes the class-alliance basis of the NDR and quotes Lenin saying that: *“the advanced class ... should fight with... energy and enthusiasm for the cause of the whole people, at the head of the whole people”*.

This advanced class is the working class.

Slovo goes on to write of the continuity of the NDR and of the institutional organising work that produces the bricks-and-mortar of nation-building.

Slovo’s incomparable document has many possibilities as the basis for a discussion, and that is always our purpose: dialogue.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The South African Working Class and the NDR, 1988, Slovo](#).





[Blade Nzimande](#); [Jeremy Cronin](#)

## Transformation, Not a Balancing Act

The main text of this part is still Joe Slovo's "The SA Working Class and the NDR". The supporting texts begin with "We Need Transformation, Not a Balancing Act" (attached, and linked below), published nine years after Slovo's pamphlet, in 1997, the year following the beginning of what has since become known as the "1996 Class Project", of which this document is an initial critique.

In the mean time, the SACP and the ANC had been legalised in 1990, the UDF had been disbanded, the CODESA talks had taken place, SACP General Secretary Chris Hani had been assassinated, the ANC had been elected to government in 1994, and Joe Slovo had passed away, on 6 January 1995. All of this triumph and tragedy, and a lot more, constituted part of the National Democratic Revolution, not least the building of the ANC and the SACP as legal, open, organised structures around this large country with its population of approximately 40 million in the mid-1990s (now well over 54 million).

This SACP document looked at a number of other documents published at that time, including from the ANC Youth League, from COSATU, and from the SACP itself, but in particular from the ANC in the form of a November, 1996 document called "[The State and Social Transformation](#)" (note that the Young Communist League was not re-established until 2003).

Nzimande and Cronin were saying that the ANC document stood out from the others in terms of its class-neutral “balancing act” approach. They conclude that the document should rather have been called “The State and Social Accommodation”.

Another way of putting this would be to say that the ANC document in question was selling class collaboration, and not class alliance. “The State and Social Transformation” was selling the end of class struggle instead of the prosecution of the class struggle by alliance with favourable forces, and against unfavourable forces.

There is a difficulty in Nzimande’s and Cronin’s document. On the third page, under “Dealing with capital”, two conceptions of capital are described: “factors of production” and “capital meaning capitalists”. The authors say that in the ANC document these two conceptions are elided or confused, giving the impression that factors of production can only come attached to capitalists, which is not so.

That is all well and good, but what is absent is the understanding of capital as a dynamic relationship, and the “accumulation” of capital as being the reproduction of that relationship and of all of the support to that relationship, including the grooming of the working class and the dominance of banks and markets.

Even in terms of pure money, what the capitalist essentially does with it is to throw it into circulation, not hoard it. Unlike the accumulated wealth of the miser, which is not capital, though it may be money.

The circulation of money as capital proceeds via the purchase of labour-power and the extraction of surplus-value. Therefore, we do not escape the reproduction of capital by making the state the owner of the capital.

The revolutionary escape from capital is achieved by accumulating the prerequisites of socialism, which mainly consist of the ever-increasing ability of masses of people to resolve and act together, consciously, and scientifically. This is the “Democratic” part of the National Democratic Revolution.

Nzimande’s and Cronin’s document does arrive at this point. It does, at the end, confirm that the free-willing collective Subject is both the maker and the product of revolution.

- **The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Transformation not a balancing act, 1997, Nzimande and Cronin.](#)**



## The Brutal Side of Capitalist Development

The third document in this part of our NDR course, wherein the main text is Joe Slovo's "SA Working Class and the NDR", is David Moore's 2004 article, "[The Brutal Side of Capitalist Development](#)" (attached, and linked below).

This article can stand as a representation of the growing realisation in broader South African circles that the class struggle is still the engine of history, including historical "development" in any useful sense of the word, and that class struggle has winners and losers, so that the idea of "win-win" development is an illusion.

By 2004 the promise of a beneficial New World Order following the collapse of the Soviet Union a decade-and-a-half previously had proved false. Instead, the USA and its "coalition of the willing" had mounted monstrous, plundering, Imperial wars against Afghanistan and Iraq, which are referred to briefly in the attached article. There was clearly to be no holiday from class struggle at any level.

In South Africa, the YCL had been re-launched the previous year (2003) and the SACP was undergoing a growth phase which is still continuing now, in 2015.

The ANC NGC in the following year (2005) showed that the ANC had become mature and democratic in its legal form, reborn since 1990.

COSATU's affiliates had mostly stabilised into strong working-class negotiating machines capable of taking on any employer.

Moore's article in the short-lived Johannesburg newspaper "ThisDay" was a groundbreaker. It reminded readers that development is class struggle. For practitioners of the National Democratic Revolution, this was a moment of return to

class clarity after a period when all sorts of strange and non-viable flowers had bloomed.

This was not a total change. The 2007 Strategy and Tactics draft, for example, was arguably even more of a “balancing act” than previous documents of the ANC. This, and the 2009 discussion document for the SACP Special National Congress of that year, will form the last part of this 12-part series on the NDR, next week – not for “closure”, but rather as samples of the state of the national-democratic-revolutionary debate as the struggle continues.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Brutal Side of Capitalist Development, 2004, Moore](#).
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## National Democratic Revolution, Part 10



# SARS on the NDR

In July 2012 the South African Road to Socialism document was adopted by the South African Communist Party at its 13<sup>th</sup> National Congress. Chapter 4 of the document (attached and linked below) deals with the National Democratic Revolution.

Among other things it says:

*“The SACP has consistently believed that it is possible and necessary to advance and develop a national democratic revolutionary strategy of this kind that unites, in action, a range of classes and social strata. We have also always believed that within our South African reality, unless the working class builds its hegemony in every site of power, and unless socialist*

*ideas, values, organisation and activism boldly assert themselves, the NDR will lose its way and stagnate.”*

In Chapter 5, also included in the attached extract from SARS, the question of the SACP standing candidates is dealt with, in the following very clear terms:

*“Whether the Party does this and how it does it are entirely subject to conjunctural realities and indeed to engagement with our strategic allies. There are, however, three fundamental principles that will continue to guide us in this matter:*

- *“The SACP is not, and will never become, a narrowly electoralist formation;*
- *“Our approach to elections will be guided in this phase of the struggle by our overall strategic commitment to advancing, deepening and defending the national democratic revolution – the South African road to socialism; and*
- *“Our strategic objective in regard to state power is to secure not party political but working class hegemony over the state.”*

SARS is the strategic policy document of the SACP.

**The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [SA Road to Socialism, 2012, Chapters 4 and 5, National Democratic Revolution](#).**

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[Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma](#)

## ANC Strategy and Tactics, 2012 Preface

This is the last item of the CU series on the National Democratic Revolution. It is the second in this final part, where the main document is SARS Chapters 4 and 5. The attached booklet-printable document, also linked below, is the Preface to the ANC Strategy and Tactics document. This new Preface was passed by the 53<sup>rd</sup> ANC National Conference at Mangaung, while the main document remains as it was passed at the previous, 2012 Polokwane Conference.

### Static or revolutionary?

The ANC Strategy and Tactics has been amended several times since the original was adopted in Morogoro in 1969.

The ANC 52<sup>nd</sup> National Conference at Polokwane in 2007 was considered a victory for the popular forces within the ANC. But the “S&T” document launched at that Conference was arguably a revision of the previously much clearer understanding of class and colour in South Africa. It is somewhat ambiguous, or indeterminate, about the role of the various “motive forces”, which are what the communists would normally refer to as classes.

The current, Polokwane version of the S&T is characterised by a static and non-revolutionary conception of “National Democratic Society”. The theoreticians of the ANC felt compelled to propose an end-point to the process that is the NDR. The “National Democratic Society” or NDS is described as an ideal society, but it is not called socialist.

The new Preface elevates the NDS to headline status (“Decisive and sustained action to build a National Development Society”). The Preface also deals, among others, with Organisational Renewal and with the Second Phase of the Transition, as conceived of by the ANC.

The SACP continues to describe the NDR as the shortest road to socialism, but the ANC does not.

Yet the ANC remains exactly what it was intended to be, which is a liberation movement, and as such, a vehicle for class alliance within the National Democratic Revolution. It conforms perfectly to the vision that Lenin articulated in 1920, as seen in [Part 2](#) of this course.

The ANC is a historic movement of intelligent, energetic people. It has its own view of what it is and what its goals are, which may be at variance with reality as seen by, for example, the communists. It could hardly be otherwise. Everyone should respect the sincere critique that is the S&T, and hope to learn from it.

Nevertheless, the NDR has to be more than a set of tick-boxes (united, democratic, non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous). It has to be alive, and capable of more than the achievement of pre-conceived outcomes. That is what development means. We have not yet arrived at a closure of the NDR. The struggle continues.

**N.B.**, in the glossary at the bottom of the [Strategy and Tactics](#) document, a definition is given that recognises people’s power as the aim of the NDR. It says:

***National Democratic Revolution: A process of struggle that seeks to transfer power to the people and transform society into a non-racial, non-sexist, united, democratic one, and changes the manner in which wealth is shared, in order to benefit all the people.***

The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Preface to Strategy and Tactics, ANC, 2012](#).

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